
N.C. BOARD



OF ETHICS

GEORGE F. BASON
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"WHEREAS, THE PEOPLE OF NORTH CAROLINA ENTRUST PUBLIC POWER TO ELECTED AND APPOINTED OFFICIALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF FURTHERING THE PUBLIC, NOT PRIVATE OR PERSONAL, INTEREST..."
EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. ONE

Letter from the Director

A week ago, Doris Bason lost her devoted husband of 57 years; four children lost a loving father; eight grandchildren lost a doting and proud grandfather; the Board of Ethics lost its universally respected chairman; the People of North Carolina lost a dedicated and irreplaceable public servant; and I lost a mentor and friend. I guess when you look at all of the people whose lives were impacted by Judge Bason, I rank pretty far down on the list; but that does little, if anything, to assuage the deep personal loss. I can think of no one who has impacted me more in such a short period of time.

I only worked with Judge Bason for a little less than seven years. By the time I joined the Board of Ethics, "the Judge" was already a legend. He had a proven track record as a fearless advocate for what was "right." He was the Governor's "go to" guy when he needed someone to bring respect and credibility to an organization or cause. As was said at his funeral, he didn't have to look up in a book what was right; he just *knew* what was right. People have no idea how true that statement is, or how rare the quality. I wish I had a fraction of it, and I was looking forward to learning at his feet for many more years. Neither I nor anyone else will ever have that opportunity, and it is our tremendous loss.

So on behalf of the Board of Ethics and its staff, I bid farewell to a great leader and good friend. We will cherish his memory and forever acknowledge his contribution to a cause he held dear. Good bye, Judge. May you rest in peace knowing you have touched many lives and made this world a better place. May we honor his memory by trying to do the same.

Perry Y. Newson

George F. Bason

February 9, 1926 – February 3, 2006



George F. Bason was appointed chairman of the Board of Ethics in 1993 by Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. He served in that capacity until his death last week. Even when his health declined a bit recently, he never considered totally "retiring." To the end he was monitoring Board business, keeping a particularly keen eye on recent efforts to consider an ethics law for the executive branch of state government. Please see his full obituary on the next page.

JUDGE GEORGE F. BASON, 79, died at his home on Friday, February 3. He was born on February 9, 1926, the younger of two sons of William H. and Hannah Ashe Bason.

A native and lifelong resident of Raleigh, he was an outspoken judge who advocated persistently and aggressively for treatment for severely disturbed children. He enlisted in the Navy after graduation from Broughton High School in 1944. Judge Bason received his undergraduate and law degrees at the University of North Carolina in February 1951, and was admitted to the Bar in April of that year.

He practiced law as an associate with James H. Pou Bailey and then served as law clerk for the Honorable Don Gilliam, Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina. Following that clerkship he practiced law in partnership with Bailey in the firm of Bailey and Bason.

In 1968 he ran a successful campaign for judge in the newly-formed District Court system. He was appointed Chief Judge of the 10th Judicial District (Wake County) and was re-elected without opposition for successive terms for 22 years until his retirement from the bench in September, 1991.

Judge Bason enjoyed the challenge of being the first Chief Judge, organizing the new court from scratch and supervising its operation. In 1975 he had the option of moving to other levels of the judiciary, but he decided to remain in District Court in order to focus on juvenile court and to pursue his commitment to treatment for severely disturbed children.

In 1979 Judge Bason called a press conference in his courtroom and distributed a press release appealing to legislators to establish a much-needed treatment program for disturbed children. When the legislature failed to act, he recruited the untreated juveniles' attorneys to initiate a federal class action suit against the state of North Carolina. The suit sought to compel the state to establish and operate an appropriate program for treatment for violent and severely disturbed children. The suit was successful, and Judge James B. McMillan's ruling led to the creation of North Carolina's first statewide treatment program for disturbed children.

Judge Bason retired from the bench in 1991 but was called back to public service just two years later. In 1993, Governor Jim Hunt appointed him Chairman of the N.C. Board of Ethics, a position he held until his death. Just three years later, Governor Hunt called on him to chair the N.C. Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission. He served in that position until his resignation in 2001.

Judge Bason served the state and his community as a member of many boards and commissions, including the Commission on the Future of Justice and the Courts of North Carolina; the Juvenile Code Revision Committee; the Governor's Crime Commission; the Judicial Selection Study Commission; the Bench, Bar, Law School Liaison Committee; and the N.C. Center on Crime and Punishment.

His service on boards that focused on children--which were closer to his heart--included Haven House, Inc.; Safechild, Inc.; Partners; Planned Parenthood; Carolina Legal Assistance; Family Services of Wake County; N.C. Conference for Social Services; Wake County Communities in Schools; and Lucy Daniels Developmental Preschool.

In 1979 he co-founded Childwatch, Inc., North Carolina's first statewide private child advocacy organization.

Judge Bason's service in the field of juvenile justice was noted with numerous awards, including National Juvenile Court Judge of the Year, awarded by the National CASA Association; Outstanding Child Advocate, by the N.C. Child Advocacy Institute; Outstanding Advocate of the Year, by Friends of Black Children of N.C.; Governor's Advocacy Counsel of Children and Youth; and Citizen of the Year, by the North Carolina Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. He was also recognized as a Tar Heel of the Week by the News and Observer, and appeared as a guest of William Friday on the UNC-TV program "North Carolina People."

Judge Bason was conferred membership in The Order of the Long Leaf Pine by Governor Hunt, and he held Hereditary Membership in the Society of the Cincinnati. A lifelong member of Christ Episcopal Church in Raleigh, he served the parish as Vestry Clerk, Junior Warden, and Senior Warden. At the diocesan level he was the first Business Manager, the Treasurer of the Diocese and a Director of the N.C. Episcopal Church Foundation, Inc.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, the former Madeline Doris Procter, whom he met in the first grade. He is also survived by his brother, William Ashe Bason of Raleigh; by his children, George F. Bason, Jr. of Raleigh, Jennie Beasley and husband, Earl of Winston-Salem, John Bason and wife, Amy of Raleigh, and Bebee Lee and husband, David of Clayton; and by his grandchildren, Hannah and George Bason, Jane and Meg Beasley, Anna and Will O'Neal and Sam Lee, and the baby that John and Amy are expecting in May.

After a moving funeral service at a packed Christ Episcopal Church, Judge Bason was laid to rest at Historic Oakwood Cemetery on Monday, February 6, 2006.